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A PAGEANT OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE



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HARRY L. GAGE

846

BOOK OF WORDS

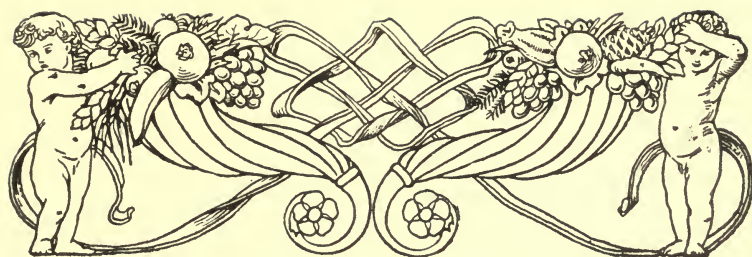
A Pageant of the Italian Renaissance

by Thomas Wood Stevens



PRODUCED
AT THE ART INSTITUTE
CHICAGO, JANUARY 26 AND 27, 1909
UNDER THE AUSPICES OF
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Cimabue	Enoch Vognild.
Margaritone	Harry F. Winebrenner.
Dante	Dudley C. Watson.
Beatrice Portinari	Margaret Hittle.
Piccarda Donati	Gertrude Spaller.
Signora Donati	Clare Stadeker.
Mosca	Fred V. Sampson.
Lambertuccio	Charles Mullen.
Oderigo	Geo. Weisenberg.
Sciatta	Oscar Yampolsky.
Buondelmonte	Frank Dillon.
Petrarch	Arthur Deering.
Boccaccio	Ralph Bradley.
Fiametta	Alice John.
	Burleigh Withers.
	Maurice Gunn.
	Marie Lockwood.
	Grace Bradshaw.
	Harriett Keene.
	Alma Hewes.
	Matie Akeley.
	Ethel Moore.
	Helen Goodrich.
	Alice John.
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	Howard R. Weld.
	Edith Emerson.
	Ione Dovey.
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	Caroll Kelly.
The Group of the Decamerone	
Prologue	
Fra Angelico	
Fra Lippo Lippi	
A Prior.....	
Lurezia Buti	
A Nun.....	
A Prioress	
Domenico De Veneziano	
Andrea Dal Castagno	

Leonardo Da Vinci	Jane Heap.
Verrochio	Chas. Scheffler.
A Bird Seller	Harry Bailey.
Lorenzo De Medici	John Bowers.
Giuliano De Medici	Frank Hardin.
Poliziano	Vida Sutton.
Botticelli	William Owen.
Simonetta Vespucci	Anna Titus.
Savonaralo	Rockaway.
Ghirlandajo	Margraff.
Michael Angelo, as a youth.....	Katherine Maxey.
Piero Di Cosimo	Ralph Holmes.
Andrea Del Sarto as a youth....	Irma Kohn.
A Bride	Lucille Comley.
A Groom	C. A. Reid.
The Bride's Father	J. Manne.
The Groom's Father	John P. Jackson.
The Bride's Mother	Florence Cohen.
Lorenzo Di Credi	C. Bertram Hartman.
Bernardetto De Medici	Ralph Pearson.
A Dancer	Virginia Brooks.
Rafael	Ronald Hargrave.
Cellini	Chas. Mulligan.
Michael Angelo	Albert Sterner.
Pope Julius	Richard F. Babcock.
Titian	Oliver Dennett Grover.
Tintoretto	Chas. Francis Browne.
Paolo Veronese as a youth.....	Allen Philbrick.
Don Diego de Mendoza	Ralph Clarkson.
Duke of Mantua	Chas. Boutwood.
Della Casa	Geo. Schultz.
Pietro Aretino	Adam Emery Albright.
Giovanni Verdezotti	F. De Forrest Schook.
Vittoria Colonna	Miss Marion Redlich.
Cardinal Farnese	Alfred Juergens.
Doge of Venice	John F. Stacey.
Vasari	Chester Brown.
Bramante	R. H. Salisbury.
A Girl Friend of the Bride.....	Mrs. Ralph Holmes.
Giovanni Tournabuoni	Ralph Harris.
Jacopo L'Indaco.....	Jo Gibson Martin.
Monica	Laura H. Watson.
Cosa	Claire Sutherland.
A Prioress	Miss Elsie Earle.
A Nun	Kathleen Connery.



HARRY SLATER

A PAGEANT OF THE RENAISSANCE

THE ARGUMENT



HE HERALD ENTERS; HE ANNOUNCES THE TIME AND THE SCENE—FLORENCE, IN THE LATE THIRTEENTH CENTURY; SPEAKS OF THE BIRTH OF FLORENCE, AND OF HER GLORY; ANNOUNCES THE TRIUMPH OF CIMABUE'S MADONNA; AND FORETELLS THE TRAGEDY OF BUONDELMONTE'S DEATH.

The procession of Cimabue's Madonna enters, bearing the picture aloft amid great rejoicing. Cimabue, clad in white fes-

tal garments, walks with King Charles of Anjou, and is followed by the Priors of Florence, among them Dante, and by the artists Memmi and Taddeo Gaddi. The Herald watches the passing of the procession into the church.

Giotto enters, attired as a shepherd, and carrying a green staff. He inquires for Cimabue, and the Herald tells him the master is coming; the Herald then goes on into the church. Cimabue comes out, wondering at his triumph; he meets Giotto and welcomes him into his service. Margaritone appears as an old man; he laments the passing of the Byzantine school, and predicts that painting shall be a curse to Florence; which Cimabue disputes, foretelling the greatness of Giotto's future fame.

Dante enters, meets Giotto, and speaks with him and Cimabue; the three then follow Beatrice Portinari into the church.

Men of the Uberti and Amedei enter—Mosca the One-Eyed, Sciatta, Lambertuccio, Oderigo, and others; they conceal themselves in ambush to wait for Buondelmonte. Piccarda Donati and her mother also await Buondelmonte on the steps. He comes, is attacked and slain, and a battle between the Uberti and the Donati ensues. Night falls while Piccarda is weeping for the slain Buondelmonte, as the tumult is quelled by Dante.

The lights come on, and the place is empty; the Herald again speaks, telling of the passing of sixty years, of the great plague that has fallen upon the city, and of the coming of Boccaccio and Petrarch.

The procession of the Brothers of the Misericordia comes out of the church; at their passing Petrarch and Boccaccio speak together, and with Fiametta. With the Ten of the Decamerone, Boccaccio goes out to Fiesole, leaving Petrarch to take his way to Avignon. The scene changes to Fiesole, and the Ten dance.

The Herald enters, and speaks of the New Learning, of the wars that have rent Italy in the intervening century, and of the sculptors, Donatello, Brunelleschi, and Ghiberti, who have adorned Florence.

Fra Angelico enters with Fra Filippo Lippi, Lippi speaking of the art of Massaccio, Angelico of his own illuminations. An ecclesiastical procession enters, bringing Angelico's appointment as archbishop of Florence; he refers the matter to his prior, refusing the appointment. Lippi goes off wondering at the simplicity of the man. The Herald appears, and the scene changes back to Florence.

The curtain withdrawn discloses Lippi painting for the nuns, the tableau of the picture before him; night closes in, and Lippi persuades the novice, Lucrezia, who was posing for the madonna, to run off with him; the prioress, coming to look for her, finds the picture but no model.

Enter Bernardetto de Medici and Andrea dal Castagno. The secret of Antonello de Messina. The murder of Domenico; the guard comes and finds Andrea wailing over his dead friend.

The day gradually comes up, and the scene discloses a street in Florence on a market day. Lionardo da Vinci enters, followed by Verrochio, who vows he will paint no more since he has seen Lionardo's angels. Lorenzo the Magnificent crosses the stage with his train, setting out for Fiesole.

The scene again changes to Fiesole, Lorenzo and Giuliano holding a court of love. Botticelli and Simonetta.

The Herald. Florence again. Savonarola enters, followed by Botticelli and others; he inveighs against the Medici. Lorenzo appears, saying he is near to death, and demanding that Savonarola come to give him absolution. The Fra makes his three conditions. The procession of young men, and the burning of the Vanities.

A scene in the shop of Ghirlandajo, the Garland Maker. A wedding party comes in, ordering the various equipment which the artist can provide; and being served by Michael Angelo as a boy; also by Andrea del Sarto and the pupils of Piero de Cosimo; the haggling over the gifts; the bridal party goes out, and a messenger comes in for Michael Angelo calling him to the house of the Medici; his parting with Ghirlandajo.

The Herald speaks of the discovery of America, of the death of Lorenzo and the like.

The Herald comes on, and his speaking is followed by a dance which symbolizes the Renaissance. After this the scene changes to Rome.

Then Michael Angelo, Pope Julius, Rafael, Bramante, and others appear, the Pope visiting Michael Angelo.

After this, a pageant of Venice in its glory; Titian, about to set out for Rome, receives the farewells of his townsfolk, and greetings from the Emperor, Francis the First, and other great ones of earth.

Titian and Michael Angelo—the two old men, about whom

the art of the world goes down. And at the last the supreme wisdom of Buonarroti.

NOTE—The scenes of the pageant represent, in a composite fashion, Florence, Fiesole, Rome and Venice; but as the action may be imagined to take place in various parts of each city, it has been thought proper to omit all mention of the special place of each scene. Thus, the arch represents a square in Florence, and all the Florentine incidents take place in the same setting. For a similar convenience, and to avoid a multiplicity of separate scenes, episodes are sometimes conventionally represented as happening in one day, when their actual occurrence may have covered a considerable period. The main chronology of the pageant is strictly historical.

Many of the incidents are, of course, purely imaginary, being based on traditional rather than historical authority. For the bulk of the work, Vasari's *Lives* will furnish the material; some of the chronicle histories have also been drawn upon, the Buondelmonte episode being taken from Machiavelli. Symond's history of the period has, of course, been invaluable; and Cellini's *Autobiography* has been a suggestive aid in some of the lighter scenes. The episode of Botticelli and Simonetta is founded upon Maurice Hewlett's delightful story, "Quattrocentisteria"; and the scene before Ghirlandajo's Shop was suggested by the Blashfields' intimate essay, "The Florentine Artist." Numerous other works have been consulted, but the effort has been to make the pageant eloquent of the spirit and tradition of the Renaissance, rather than faithful to the letter of the more modern and less picturesque historians.

A PAGEANT OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE



A PAGEANT OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE



SCENE I THE HERALD OF THE PAGEANT



TIME, WHO DOTTH BIND MEN WITH
HIS CHAIN OF YEARS,
FATE, WHO DOTTH MAKE ALL
LIFE TO BLOOM AND CLOSE,
DEATH, WHO DOTTH REAP FOR
TIME AND FATE: THESE THREE
WAGE WAR AGAINST THE STAR-
RY CROWN OF SONG,
AND STAND IN DREADED

leaguer, with drawn swords,
Before the garden where the Rose of Art,
Like a blown flame, hath being and delight.

But here, behold, a miracle; Time sleeps;
Fate nods; and Death hath had his will. To-night,
The centuries, like pages of a book,
Turn backward, and the Rose of Art doth breathe,
With a new perfume, springtides long forgot.
Behold, the world awakes again from sleep,
And the long darkness of the middle age
Doth break and flee before the coming dawn.
Here tread we now the paths that Dante knew
In Florence; the Novella Church is this,
And these six hundred years of war and song,
Six hundred years of glory and of shame,
Are all to be as they had never been,
All magically blotted out; and here
We see as in a darkened glass the town—
The Lily Town of Florence in the spring.
Behold, Our City! From Imperial Rome
And proud Fiesole she takes descent,
And strife was in her blood ere she was born;
Strife, and the seed of an immortal flower
Blown here amid the quickening mists of war,
The flower of art that withers not nor fades.
And ere the sun of this one day go down
The first unfading petal shall unfold,
And the first messenger from the high hills
Shall come to seek the garden of delight.

[Trumpets heard far off, blowing
joyously.

The trumpets sound. The royal banners wave;
The guest of Florence walks in festival.
And from his house beyond the walls they bring
Our Cimabue's first Madonna home.

[The trumpets nearer.

The city cries aloud for solemn joy,
Along the streets the blessed folk do kneel,
And weep with wonder as the picture passes.
But my foreseeing heart doth leap with dread,
For this day yet another burden hath,
And deadly feuds are folded in its hours,
For this day Buondelmonte to his bride
Comes home, and by the dark Siena gate
Hatred in scarlet mask doth wait for him.
Ah, Florence! Beauty luring Hope to death!
City of Lilies! Art, and Love and Song—

Giotto, Buondelmonte, Dante: Time
Before these three shall stay his pitiless hand,
[The trumpets sound nearer, and the
procession enters, passing into the
church, Cimabue walking with
Charles of Anjou. The Herald
keeps his place beside the entrance.
Following the procession comes
Giotto attired as a shepherd boy,
bearing a green staff.

GIOTTO

I seek for Cimabue.

HERALD

Lad, thy name.

GIOTTO

Giotto Bondone. Is the master there?

HERALD (Passing into the church)

He comes.

[Enter Cimabue, from the church.
Giotto starts at the sight of him,
not having recognized the traveler
of the day before as the honored
figure of the procession.

CIMABUE

[Speaking as one in vision.

How like a conqueror home from war
I walk to-day; kings bear me company;
I hear men speak; I see the festival,
But as one dreaming. What is this I do,
That kings should condescend, the people praise?
I have but wrought as best I knew, and men,
Seeing I strive to make Our Lady live
Pardon the wrong I do Her holy face,
And praise me for it. But the vision flies.

GIOTTO

[Kneeling beside him.

Forgive me, master. I have come. Forgive.
I did not know, up there along the hills,
That thou wert lord of Florence.

CIMABUE

I am not lord of Florence. (Sees Giotto.) Ha, the lad
I found among his flocks. A welcome, boy.

GIOTTO

My father bade me come. He gives me to thee.

CIMABUE

Gives thee?

GIOTTO

Master, to mould as thou dost choose.

CIMABUE

I take thee, lad, and by Our Lady's help,
And by the favor of Saint Luke, I'll strive
That thou shalt be a master in thy time.

[Enter Margaritone, as an old man.]

MARGARITONE

Ah, Cimabue, what new thing is this?
The people clamour of a miracle,
And say that thou hast painted it.

CIMABUE

No miracle, my master, but a thing
I know too well to praise. Yet it is new.

MARGARITONE

I ask no more. The light from mine old eyes
Fails fast, and I shall soon be dark; and yet
Too well I see the strange new thing ye do,
The tinselled trifles made to stand instead
Of all the rich mosaics we have wrought,
Faithfully, piece by piece, full count,
And circling golden round the heads of saints,
Eternal from the great Byzantine source,
Held in traditions that Saint Luke himself
Framed while the Caesars still were throned in Rome.
And this new thing ye do—this painted thing,
Shall prove a curse to Florence, and to Art
A final doom and black forgetfulness.

CIMABUE

Margaritone, when I came to thee,
I took thy words, and humbly honored them;
Thou knowest I am humble still in heart.
But this new, wondrous thing shall not drag down
The high tradition of our holy Saint,
But raise it to a height we dare not dream.

Thy day is past. Mine passes. But one comes
Who shall be greater than we twain have been.
A dawn-fire burns among us.

[Margaritone shrinks away from him.
[Dante enters from the church.

GIOTTO [Seeing Dante.

What man is that?

CIMABUE

Dante Alighieri. What of him?

GIOTTO

I never saw before a face so sad
Master, when I have learned thine art, may I
Draw him?

CIMABUE

If so he please to sit for thee.

GIOTTO

I shall not need him then. I'll not forget.

DANTE

I wonder, Cimabue, while the town
Throngs to thy picture, thou shouldst walk aside,
And while the king of Anjou and his peers
Applaud thee, thou shouldst seek a shepherd lad
And here hold converse in the street. Men say
This quarter shall be named anew for thee—
Borgo Allegri—Street of Joy.

CIMABUE

Signore,
This lad is no mere shepherd. He is one
Who shall surpass me, when his art is ripe.
Giotto, Signore Dante shall be friend to thee.

DANTE

I can deny thee nothing.

GIOTTO

[Eagerly,

Tell men then, Signore,
What brings the mighty sorrow to thy face,
And makes it seem like thunder, and deep grief,
And winds that weep along the hills at night.
I—pardon me, Signore—I presume—

DANTE

Is it so plainly writ, then, in my look?

GIOTTO

I have no skill in reading, sir. But thou
Dost somehow move me strangely. I am young
And had not known such things; a lamb that's lost,
And little sorrows, such as shepherds know,
And songs that make one laugh and weep at once—
These only have I known. But thou dost weep
Down in thy soul, as for a world aflame.

DANTE

And what if that be so? There is a world—
Boy, let it pass. I think on Florence. Here
Is cause enough for grief. And on our world—
Can I find joy in this? But most of all
On the strange fate of my awakened soul
That may not sleep again; and on the love
That did arouse me—fill me with great light
Dim songs and echoes of a voice divine,
And visions and desires more chaste than tears,
And the new life—

[He pauses, as Beatrice Portinari enters; she passes on into the church, looking straight before her. Dante looks after her; Giotto goes over to him and touches his hand, gently, and Dante grasps the boy's hand eagerly. Together, following Cimabue, they also pass into the church, Dante hesitating, and Giotto leading him on.

[As they go off, men of the Uberti enter, armed, and conceal themselves behind the statue pedestal and along the front of the church. Then Piccarda Donati enters, with her mother, and they go up the church steps, loitering.

PICCARDA

Here, mother, pause a while.
Here Buondelmonte said that he would come.

SIGNORA DONATI

Aye, he will come, for he hath looked on thee.
What matter if the child of the Uberti weep,
She is not fair as thou. And he will come,
For Buondelmonte, if I read him right,
Is one to love, and win, and have his way.

[Lights go down; sunset glow.]

PICCARDA

And yet my mother, there 's a fear that stirs
Deeper than all the marvel of my joy.
He comes. But as we passed along, I saw
Dark men of the Uberti, Amedei,
And such as hate my lord and all his house.
Why gather they? And last night as I gazed
Out toward Siena, praying for my lord,
A star fell red from Heaven. Mother, I fear.

SIGNORA DONATI

A maid's fear. Be thou still. He comes.

[Even as she speaks, Buondelmonte draws near. He is followed by two servants. As the servants pass the statue, men of the Uberti follow, touch them on the shoulder, and as they turn, stab them; one of the servants falls; the other, wounded, breaks away, crying, "Buondelmonte—thy foes." Then he too is cut down. Buondelmonte turns on the step, catching Piccarda in his arms. The Uberti move forward, deliberately, to surround him. As they draw nearer, Piccarda returns to her mother, and Buondelmonte draws his sword, shouting, "Buondelmonti, your swords!"

[Even as he speaks the Uberti close in. He resists, but falls, as the Buondelmonti troop out of the church. The fight rages around the church door; Buondelmonte struggles to his feet, and fights his way out, at the head of his men, dying at the foot

of the statue. There is a pause. Piccarda darts out from the doorway, and throws herself down by the body. The lights go down; Dante appears in the doorway, a torch in his hand, commanding peace. All the lights go out, except Dante's torch; for a moment Piccarda is heard, sobbing. Then the music takes up a solemn strain. The light appears again, and the stage is clear, save for the Herald, who advances and speaks.



SCENE II THE HERALD



RIEF IS THE SPAN OF GLORY AND
OF LIFE,
AND THE SWIFT YEARS, LIKE
SWALLOWS IN THE AUTUMN,
TAKE FLIGHT AND PASS WITH
RUSHING OF KEEN WINGS.
THE NIGHT THAT FELL ON
BUONDELMONTE'S DOOM
SYMBOLS THE PASSING OF
THREE SCORE OF YEARS,

And this returning day in Florence brings
The summer of deep woe, of the great plague.
Giotto and Dante—simple and august—
These mighty twain have passed beyond the tomb,
And Italy hath mourned them; but the grief
For their exalted souls grows pale, and Death
Hooded and grey, with pestilential step
Doth walk our streets, and man and maid and child
He touches fatefully with unseen hands,
And at the touch they die. This mortal plague
Hath made light-hearted Florence like a grave,
And filled our houses where the music swelled
With sorrow and with lamentation.
The Brothers of the Misericordia
These only dare to lift the stricken dead
And give them back to earth disconsolate.
The dirge of their dark mercy draweth near;
And after them doth come Boccaccio;
For here he meets the daughter of a king,
Sicilian Fiametta, bloom of love.
And wise Petrarca, come from Avignon

With an immortal passion in his soul
That day by day drips down in golden song.
The picture changes, and the morning wind
Blows on the hill top of Fiesole.

[A dirge is heard, and the Brothers
of the Misericordia appear in pro-
cession, coming out of the church.
Petrarch and Boccaccio enter as the
procession passes.

PETRARCH

What men are these? The city swoons with death,
And everywhere I meet these masks at work.

BOCCACCIO

They are the few who dare to love mankind,
The few who serve the desperate need of Florence.
And some of these in masks are princes; some
Are men of little worth. This holy toil
They share. We call them Misericordia.

PETRARCH

Great hearts are these, in direful occupation.

[As he speaks, the last of the proces-
sion pass off.

BOCCACCIO

I, too, have served my turn. But here I wait
For certain ladies, merry friends of mine,
And others—gentlemen of Florence; we—
Having well served the city and gone free—
Plan to fare forth—up to Fiesole,
And there in entertainment pass some days.
Wilt thou not come, my Petrarch?

[Enter, Fiametta, as he speaks.

FIAMETTA

Nay, not so cold—

Messer Francesco surely goes with us.
How shall we learn, we folk of baser strain,
The ancient high philosophy he sings?
What shall we know of Vergil, or of Troy,
Or of Queen Helen and Odysseus,
And how she gave him a great clew of silk
To guide him to the monster; and how Greece
In the Republic's time, kept Caesar out?
What shall we learn, if Messer Petrarch sulk,

Like the great Hector, in his tent at home?
I warn thee, sir, our tales will all be told
About light matters, love, and pleasantries,
And all the telling will not mend one jot
The lamentable ignorance of the world.
But if thou comest, we shall all grow wise.

PETRARCH

Wiser and sadder, lady. For I, too,
Have thought and sung on love, but not so light
As thou dost hold it.

FIAMETTA

Lightly do I then
Hold love—that is the sum of my desire.

PETRARCH

Lightly, for thou dost touch thy bliss.

BOCCACCIO

Petrarch,
Thou art a prayer, and not a man at all,
Lifting thy love unto a cold white star
While we do walk in lanes where roses lean
And life's as warm and free and musical
As was the old Corinthian ecstasy.
Horace, and Vergil, and the Greeks we love—
Have they not sung of beauty and delight?

PETRARCH

Aye, sung—and so have I, Boccaccio.
[Looking at the locket he wears.

FIAMETTA

What hast thou there?

PETRARCH

A picture that Simone
In Avignon hath painted.

FIAMETTA

Let me look.

PETRARCH

[Concealing the locket as she looks
at it.
Forgive me, lady—this is not for laughter.

FIAMETTA

A face I saw—a lady with deep eyes.

PETRARCH

Silence. I will not have thee mock at it.

FIAMETTA

I mock at love! Nay, nor at learning neither,
Boccacce hath such joy in ancient books.
That thou dost love a maid in Avignon
Bringeth thee nearer to my wayward heart
Than all the epics, Greek and Latin script
Thou hast recovered from the night of time.

PETRARCH

A lady—Princess—back in Avignon.

FIAMETTA

A lady?—

BOCCACCIO

Fiametta, press him not.
He hath no cold words for this inward fire.

FIAMETTA

And hath he made no songs for her?

BOCCACCIO

Such songs
As only once in the deep heart of man
Love and his sorrow hath made audible.

FIAMETTA

Signore, I'll not be denied. If this
Be some great deathless love that breathes in song
Like that Achilles bore Hyppolyta,
Or Jason burned for Ariadne with—
(Thou seest, Boccacce, my learning grows apace,)
I'll have thee sing, and on the wings of it,
We all shall drift up to Fiesole.

[A song is heard.

What song is that?

BOCCACCIO

'Tis Petrarch's song, for her
In Avignon.

[A girl enters, singing.

[Petrarch sings. The others of the
Ten come out and group themselves
around Boccaccio and Fiametta. As
the song closes, they all rise and
pass off stage, leaving Petrarch, and
singing the refrain of his song. Fi-

ametta, going last, runs back to
Petrarch, gives him a flower from
her hair, and follows the rest.

PETRARCH'S SONG.

A glove from thy white hand, O queen,
I found, and that was destiny.

A glove from thy white hand, O queen,
I stole, and by the flowery lea

I bore my prize, and in my heart
The perfume of it breathed a flame

And lo! I sang, until mine art
Aroused my soul unto my shame.

The glove from thy white hand, my fair—
I could not keep, I could not give;

The glove from thy white hand, my fair—
I sent it back, and now I live

In honour shorn of all delight.

And thoughts of thee, and of the glove

They bring me through the lonely night

These fiery songs of grief and love.

The glove from thy white hand, O queen,
It tangled in my heart strings there;

The glove from thy white hand, O queen,
I gave thee back, and now I dare

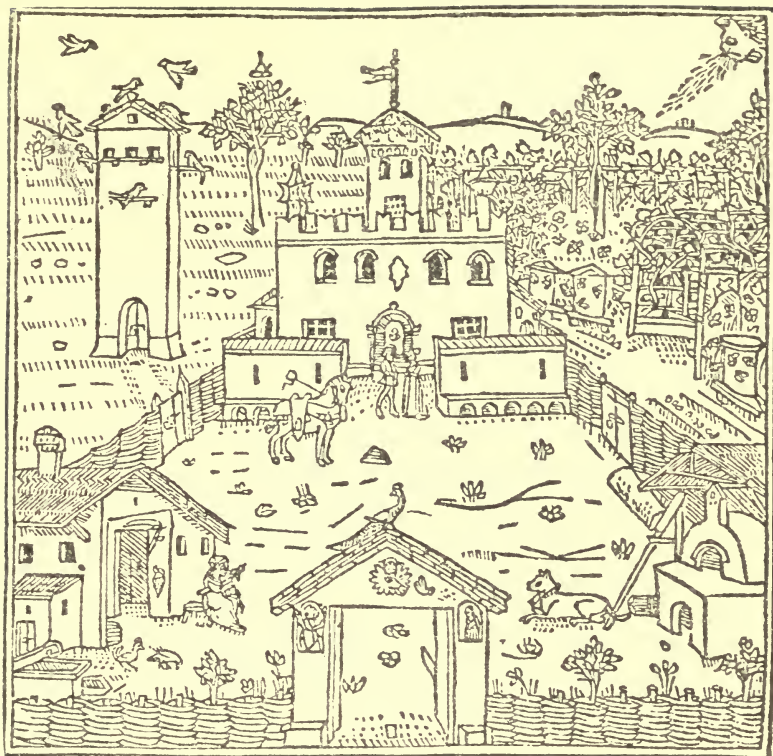
To face the days that follow me,

But though my songs with praises glow,

The songs I make can never be

A solace to this golden woe.

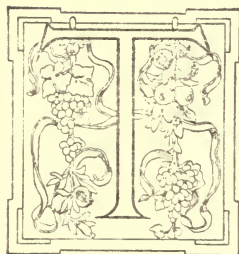
[The scene changes to Fiesole, and
the Ten dance.



INTERMISSION SCENE III

[Enter the Herald

THE HERALD



THE MIGHTY POETS OF THE AN-
TIQUE WORLD,
THE SAGES AND THE ORATORS,
ALL WERE FORGOT,
AND ONLY THINGS OF HOLY
FAME, AND DEEDS
THRICE LETTERED IN TRADI-
TIONS OF THE CHURCH,
CAME TO US FROM THAT
BRIGHT ANTIQUITY.

But Petrarch caught some faintly echoed strain,
And made it live again in scholar's hearts;

Boccaccio, wise amid his amorous mirth,
Proclaimed the grace of Grecian song, and spoke,
When he so willed, with high Latinity.
And these two have aroused an endless train
Of thirsty souls that drink the classic age.
But Art, who woke with Cimabue, and who smiled
For a brief season upon Giotto's fame—
Art sleeps again. And all through Italy
The thunder and swift lightning of the wars
Have never ceased. And so a hundred years
Pass by, and men who in the Holy Land
Fought out the perils of the last Crusade,
Homeward returning, found no great new thing
Save as the perfume of Augustan times
Hath breathed into the books of Italy,
And the old learning slowly comes to light;
And that the sculptors, Donatello's friends,
Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, Della Robbia,
Have wrought, in Florence, beauty out of stone.
But here, in still Fiesole, the seasons creep
Slowly around the years, and no change comes.
And one, a holy man, Angelico,
Here prayerfully doth emulate Saint Luke,
And when he paints a crucifix, he weeps,
And when a saint doth smile beneath his hand,
A rapture fills him, and immediate
From God he holds the blessed stroke.
Now with this worthy friar another comes,
Fra Lippo Lippi, careless of his soul,
And filled with all the blithe desires of earth.
And him, since he is bent on some diverting deed,
We'll follow, and it please you, sirs, to Florence.

[Exit the Herald.

[Enter, Fra Angelico, carrying a
book, and Fra Lippo Lippi, carrying
a branch of flowers.

ANGELICO

Say what thou wilt, I can not alter it;
The thing once done, is done by Heaven's will,
And what are we to change it?

LIPPI

Ah, but how
Are we to know what Heaven's will may be?

ANGELICO

I would not paint a Savior but with prayer,
And then—I know it must be done aright.

LIPPI

I'm not so sure; Massaccio, now, doth paint,
Youth that he is, more wondrously than thou.
And yet he never prays before he works.

ANGELICO

Brother, thine are perilous words. This youth
May be inspired by some special saint.
Since, as thou sayest, he excels us all.

LIPPI

Inspired by good wine and women more.

ANGELICO

Now doth some evil spirit speak in thee.
And not the artist, but the world's desire
Hath utterance. If this mine art be good,
It must be so because the Holy Church
In its high purpose under God, hath use
And warrant for its being. For myself,
I am as dust along the trodden way;
My pictures, brother, wrought with patient prayer,
Must testify the will of Heaven shown
Through me. I serve the Church, and am content.

LIPPI

I serve it also, when the pay is good.
But never have I painted half so ill
As after absolution, when my soul
Is clear of sin. What brothers follow us?

[Enter the Prior, with a procession
of people and monks.]

THE PRIOR

Angelico, we bring thee joyful word
Of thy preferment, from His Holiness.
Thou are to-day in Florence, dubbed Archbishop.

ANGELICO

I, an Archbishop?

THE PRIOR

So the Pope's decree
But now delivered unto us, commands.

He hears but good repute of all thy works,
That thou art studious and devout, and livst
According to our order's rigid law.
And so, he suits the honor to thy worth.

ANGELICO

Father, thou knowest I am weak and frail;
In this high office I should be as wax
To every undeserver. Go thou, father,
And pray the Pope to choose a better man.

THE PRIOR

I know thee, Fra Giovanni, to the heart.
He could not find a better.

ANGELICO

I am filled
With fears. I have a hand to paint, but not
To govern.

THE PRIOR

Dost thou doubt the Pope,
And his strong wisdom in electing thee?

ANGELICO

I know not what to say.

LIPPI

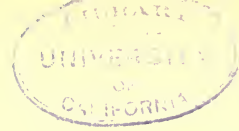
I'll tell thee, then.
Take thou this office, and its benefice,
And thy lean body shall grow fat; thy soul
Shall turn to things more human. For thine art—
What need of that, so thou dost serve the Church?
And better painters shall rejoice in thee
When thou dost buy their pictures. Take the place,
And loose a little money to the craft.

ANGELICO

I thank thee, brother, for this heedless word.
Father, I now do know the will of Heaven.
I can not take the place. In humbleness
I pray that it be given to a man
More worthy, and more apt in government.

LIPPI

The doddering fool doth babble. Age and fast
Have broken him, and he's no more a man.
Give me the place, since good men scorn it so,
And I will try the might of mirth and wine



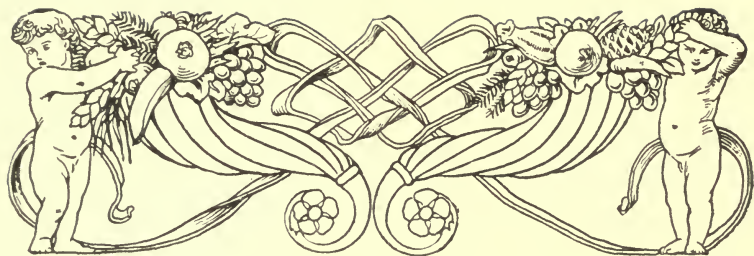
To bring the folk of Florence into Heaven.

[The Prior makes a gesture of dismay, and all the monks move away from him.

You will not? Fare ye well. I scarcely hoped

My merit could be recognized so young.

[Fra Lippi runs off right; the procession goes off, left; the Prior with Fra Angelico.



SCENE IV

The scene changes back to Florence, and Fra Lippo Lippi is seen painting a picture for the nuns; the picture is seen in tableau, Lucrezia Buti posing as the Virgin and the Prioress with other nuns kneeling in adoration. The Prioress and the other nuns grow restless, while Lippi makes eyes at Lucrezia.

THE PRIORESS

Fra Lippo, does thy precious panel carry
All of the blue I bought for thee, and all
The gold?

LIPPI

Not yet, mother.

PRIORESS

It must all be there.

LIPPI

I doubt not thou wilt seek it sharply out.

PRIORESS

We must be watchful over what we own,
Since we are poor, and gold and blue expensive.

LIPPI

I know not where to put it, mother. Still
Since thou desirest, it shall all appear.

PRIORESS

My weariness, Fra Lippo, overcomes me.
May I rest now.

LIPPI

[Without looking at her.

Move, and the picture fails.

PRIORESS

I can endure this task no longer, Lippo.

LIPPI

Yet thou art often on thy knees for days
And saintly vigils thou dost keep, and fasts;
Ah, thou shouldst mortify the ravening flesh,
Mother, and live a hard and holy life.

[Lucrezia moves uneasily.

But if thy fasting makes thy body faint,
I would not have thee suffer. Rest thou, mother.

[The tableau is broken up, the nuns
resting from their pose. Lucrezia
moves as if to rise.

Nay, sit thou still. I must see more of thee.

[The vesper bells ring, and the nuns
go in, except the Prioress, and one
other. Lucrezia keeps her place.

PRIORESS

Fra Lippo, this thy task is slowly done.
How many hours must we so serve thee, man?

LIPPI

Art, blessed mother, hath no birth nor end,
But grows in grace as patience counsels it.
For five and fifty scudi I have pledged
This panel shall be done. It is so little—

PRIORESS

And I to find the ultramarine, remember,
And all the gold thereon.

LIPPI

True, true.

Thou hast a generous heart. I had forgot.
But I, a poor unworthy painter man,
I long to make this panel marvelous,
And so atone for some few casual sins
I may have left behind me. For Our Lady
Will surely hold that my delinquent life
Is better spent, if She be glorified.
So, mother, all the toil thou dost endure

Is registered in favor of my soul.
For thee, a finer panel—I admit that, too.
But when thy body aches to bear the strain
Of this, thine attitude of reverence,
Remember how thou dost atone for me—
And this is surely Christian work, and sweet.

PRIORESS

How long, I asked thee, must I thus atone?
[Lippi looks at Lucrezia, who leans
toward him, smiling.

LIPPI

I think I shall not need thee any more.

PRIORESS

For this short quittance, thanks. Come with me, child.

LUCREZIA

The painter bade me sit a little while.

PRIORESS

I must be gone. Come in before the dusk.
[The Prioress motions to the nun to
stay, and goes out.

LIPPI

I need a sleeping angel to put here.
A sleeping angel with a face like thine,
So peaceful, and so eloquent of Heaven.

[He poses the nun in a comfortable
position, leaning against the throne;
hums a refrain for a moment, moves
about his canvas, and goes over to
Lucrezia. He leans over her chair
to satisfy himself that the nun is
asleep, and pauses, looking down
into Lucrezia's face.

How shall mere paint and skill, madonna, breathe
Into a picture this, thy loveliness.
A music floating through some golden cloud,
A dream of starry night-skies in the sea,
And incantations deeper than the wells
Of sleep enchant me; but these pallid nuns
Smother thy witchery with their dross of death.
Madonna, thou must come with me. My love
Shall burn away their ashen durances,
And give thee wings to soar unto delight.

LUCREZIA

These are no words for thee—a holy man.

LIPPI

To thee they are the words that must be said,
Inevitable words—from me to thee,
Words that the constellations had decreed
Before we two had birth into the world.

LUCREZIA

But thou dost wear this habit, and thy vows
Do they not bind thee close? were they not ta'en
With vigils and with solemn meditation?

LIPPI

With meditation, surely. I was eight years old
When first the brothers took me. What had I
To meditate upon. When I renounced the world
I did not dream that there were—such as thou.

LUCREZIA

For me, too, there's a wrong in this. Name it
Howe'er thou wilt.

LIPPI

A sin? But man is made
For sin, and for repentance. As for thee—
There is no sin for thee—thou art not bound.

LUCREZIA

But thou art bound.

LIPPI

Bound, yea—but we who serve
Earn absolution.

LUCREZIA

Yet—I cannot go.

LIPPI

Thou lovest me?

LUCREZIA

As I do live, I love thee.

LIPPI

Then come.

LUCREZIA

Thy habit frightens me.

[He takes off his gown, and appears
in the dress of a young Florentine

gentleman; he drops the gown over the sleeping nun, and Lucrezia rushes into his arms. They go out. The Prioress enters, with a candle, finds the picture, and arouses the nun, who crawls out from under the monk's gown. The screams of the Prioress arouse the nuns, who come trooping out of the door. They take in the picture and the chair, clearing the stage.

THE PRIORESS

A snake

Hath harbored here among us. Get within.
If Holy Church doth rule in Florence, I
Will have her back. This by our Lady's girdle
I vow.

THE NUN

I doubt it, mother. They are both
Filled with deceit, and with the craft of sin.
Better to go to bed, and wait till morning.

PRIORESS

Doormouse! I'll penance thee anon. Begone.
[The Prioress goes off, attended by
two of the nuns. The others retire
through the door.]



SCENE V

[Night; Bernardetto de Medici and
Andrea dal Castagno enter.]

BERNARDETTO

Andrea, what strange craft of color 's this
Thou and Domenico dost paint withal?
Men tell me everywhere how magical
The tints do gleam, and flesh doth seem to live
In these new frescoes in the Nuovo Church.

ANDREA

A craft, Ser Bernardetto, learned so hard
That we are loath to make it known at all.

BERNARDETTO

But unto me, since I, by service done
May merit something from thy courtesy,
To me thou surely wilt reveal the thing.
I am no painter, but a gentleman
Who, coming of a house that loves the arts,
Would know somewhat of this.

ANDREA

So thou dost claim,
As though my gratitude were limitless,
A secret known to only two in Florence?

BERNARDETTO

Andrea, as thou art a man, shake off
This black suspicion. Tell me all. They say
Domenico hath done a picture here
More perfect than our city ever knew.

ANDREA

Aye, aye—Domenico!

BERNARDETTO

And for thee, too,
The rumour of the city's warm with praise.

ANDREA

Only two men in Tuscany—

BERNARDETTO

For the deep interest I do bear in thee,
As one who found thee in the open fields,
And gave thy youth fair opportunity,
Making thee grow a painter, when thy fate
Had written thee a peasant otherwise,
I ask thee—tell me of this secret craft.

ANDREA

Hear, then, and never, as thou art my friend,
Disclose. This secret John of Bruges, a man
High standing in the Flemish Guild of Luke,
Found out by patience and experience.
That paint may be, as our old masters knew,
Laid on new-plastered walls, we all have known,
But otherwise, the highest skill we use
Is waste and wanton to the hand of time.
But John of Bruges hath found another way,
Mixing his colors with some certain oils,
And lo, the colors live, and keep their hue.
The secret of these oils he sometime gave
To Antonello, the Messinian.
And he, in Venice, told Domenico,
Who, coming hither, for the love he bore me,
Gave me to know the priceless mystery.

BERNARDETTO

This is a fortunate tide for thee, Andrea.
Only two men in Tuscany, and thou
One of the two. They say Domenico
Hath quite surpassed the ancient masters by it.

ANDREA

Ser Bernardetto, I have told thee all.
Forgive me—I am in an evil mood.
Let's speak no further of it. Hark, who comes?
[A lute is heard.

BERNARDETTO

Some reveller, I warrant. I'll not stay.
This fellow's music, and thine evil mood
Are equally against my taste. Farewell.
[Exit Bernardetto.]

ANDREA

That lute is his. Domenico, thou art
The only other man in Tuscany
Who knows this secret, and so rivals me.
Before thy picture all the motley throng
Cries out with praise of thee, and in the noise
And roaring volume of this flattery
I am forgotten, and my higher craft
Neglected and despised. Aye, twang thy lute.
My wrath doth bubble at the sound of it,
And whelm me in a crimson wave of hate.

[Silently he crosses and conceals
himself, as Domenico enters, loiter-
ing and singing.]

DOMENICO

[Sings.]

Flower of the thorn,
Who shall kiss thy white throat,
Who shall comfort thine eyes?
Flower of the thorn,
Flower of the rose,
Who shall love a patched coat,
Who shall make thee his prize—
Flower of the rose?

ANDREA

Only we two in Tuscany. And from
This hour—Only one man in Tuscany.

[He throws his cloak over his face,
and rushing upon Domenico, stabs
him. Domenico screams and falls.
Andrea pounces upon him. A pause.
Domenico dies. Andrea looks about
him, rises, breaks the lute in a fury,
and starts to go off. He hears the
guard coming, and returns to the
body, taking up the head in his

arms. Enter Bernardetto, with the city guard at his heels. Andrea lifts up the body, crying out as if in frantic grief.

My brother—

Ser Bernardetto, this my dearest friend,
Domenico, my brother, here is slain.

[They carry off the body, clearing the stage.]



SCENE VI THE HERALD



O DOOTH BLACK ENVY TURN THE
SOLEMN NIGHT
TO HORROR, AND THE DAY TO
EXECRATION.
THIS MAN, THE JUDAS OF THE
CRAFT, ESCAPED
THE PENALTY AND JUSTICE OF
HIS DEED
IN THIS BLIND WORLD. BUT
OTHERWHERE HE LIES

Whelmed in the fires that his dark malice kindled
And we, who know his bitter secret heart,
Call him Andrea degli Impicatti—
Andrea of the Hanged Men. So fate
Doth brand the names of those who hate their kind.
The night of envy unimaginable
Now passeth, and the misty morning stirs,
Opes drowsy eyes, and smiles on Tuscany.
The market-folk, with all their luscious fruits,
The merchants with their gorgeous orient wares,
Money-changers, and singers of the street
Arouse themselves, and day grows musical
With the clear joyous tumult of the town.
Now mark you, through this fair doth wander one
Whom Glory hath not kissed, but who shall be
Among her best beloved ere he die.
This Lionardo, young and vision-rapt,
Follows his starry quest; and after him
In state, Lorenzo of the Medici,
Who passeth with his glittering train; and if
In the uncertain light of this late year



He seem not as he was, Magnificent,
You must impute it to old jealous Time
Who shears the plume of Splendour from the helm
And rends the broidered robe of Circumstance.
But this Lorenzo, in his company
Hath Sandro Botticelli, in whose heart
The sunrise of the world is immanent,
Sandro, to whom the fluttering veils of girls,
The lovely lines of limbs that flash and dance,
The subtle, blossomy airs of spring and youth,
Are all as provinces to their conqueror;
And here this Sandro, if we watch him well,
Shall gain the ring great Aphrodite Venus gave
To wed her beauty with his deathless fame.

[The lights come up gradually,
showing a street in Florence on a
market day; merchants and traders,
dancers, beggars, and all manner of
people appear, with all sorts of
wares.

[Enter Verrochio, Perugino, and
Lorenzo di Credi.

LORENZI DI CREDI

Surely, my master, we shall find him here,
For he is oft among the market folk,
And studies the strange faces as they pass.
Shall we await him?

VERROCHIO

Nay, I cannot wait,
For there 's a fever in my blood until
I come upon him.

LORENZI DI CREDI

Is there mischief, master,
And chastisement decreed for Lionardo?

VERROCHIO

Nay, lad; I scarce can tell thee. He hath brought
A shame upon me, and a joy as well.
Lorenzo, thou art very dear to me,
And Perugino, thou no less I love.
Ye serve me truly; in your art you bring
Some credit to your master; yet no fear
Have I with you of mine authority.

Yesterday—nay, I'll speak to him—not you.

[Lionardo enters, and walks along
the market slowly, as if in thought;
he stops at the stall of a bird seller.

LORENZI DI CREDI

Master, there stands our Lionardo. Call him,
An thou wilt.

VERROCHIO

I have no haste to utter
This bleak word.

LORENZI DI CREDI

What folly's this he does?

VERROCHIO

This is the folly makes him what he is,
The whim that rules, that beggars him; and yet
Lorenzo, pray thou for such glorious whims,—
Since godlike follies have immortal ends.

THE BIRD SELLER

Nay, young sir, these birds must cost thee more
Than seven scudi. For them all—say ten.

LIONARDO

Ten scudi, and the freedom of the air
I purchase for so little—little enough
For such enchantments. Take the silver, man,
And throw the cage wide open.

[Pays him.

THE BIRD SELLER

They will fly;
They are not wing-clipped!

LIONARDO

I have paid the price:
What if I choose that they should fly? For this
I buy them, free them. Man, they carry me
On wings aloft. I, too, am freed for flight;
And this my shard of heavy flesh and bone
For one swift instant discreate, and shred
The fetters of this foul confining earth;
For one clear flash when first these wings take hold
On the rebellious air, my spirit soars,
And in that moment—I'm not wing-clipped either.

[He opens the cage, and the birds
soar upward; as they circle, his eyes
follow them; when they alight his
gaze falls, and he finds himself eye-
to-eye with Verrochio.

My master! Now, my folly 's done.

VERROCHIO

Da Vinci,
Here my stubborn will doth bend; I come
To seek thee as a pupil seeks his master.
Thou knowest well my life; I have been quick
To choose and practice many an art; to work
Wood and tough gold, and carve in rigid stone;
To draw, to play the lute and, most divine
Of all the crafts, to paint. And yester-eve
I left thee as the merest 'prentice lad
Before my panel of the Baptist John.
To-day I came again, and found thy work.
I was thy master, and I cried for joy;
I was a painter, and I wept for shame.
I came to seek thee, for my wonted life
Must change because of this. Henceforth,
I paint no more.

LIONARDO

Is it so perfect, then—
The kneeling, wondering angel in the corner?

VERROCHIO

Too perfect for my skill to strive against.

LIONARDO

Master, thy praise doth fire me with supreme
And flaming rapture.

[He moves toward the bird seller.

I must have more birds.

VERROCHIO

Thou thinkest of my praise; not of the pride
I broke to tell thee.

LIONARDO

True; that is my nature.
I can not alter that.

VERROCHIO

Then fare thee well.
But when wide Italy doth come to praise
Remember sometime who thy master was.

LIONARDO

I'll not forget.

[Exit Verrochio with Lorenzi di
Credi and Piero Perugino.]

The honour I would rear for one I love
Doth topple in the air, and crush him down.
Yet, ah—the beating, lifting, soaring wings!

[Lorenzo de Medici and his train,
including Giuliano de Medici, Poli-
ziano, Sandro Botticelli, and Simon-
etta Vespucci, cross the stage on
their way to Fiesole.]



SCENE VII

The scene changes to Fiesole, and Lorenzo and his train enter; Lorenzo is seated on a throne, and the group arranges itself to suggest Botticelli's picture.

LORENZO

Now, while the spring's flushed whiteness on the hills
 Makes in the air a redolent ecstasy,
 And the sad face of nature smiles again,
 I bid you to a tourney of the arts;
 A Court of Love, as in Provence they sung,
 And lo! I give you this for your songs' burden:
 Beauty. Now let the lutes be strung.

GIULIANO

My brother,
This is no theme for unrelated words;
The poets should have time for phrasing it.

LORENZO

Time for it? Nay, say rather that they speak
What they must long have conned, and know
Even as they know to breathe and sing. How now,
Poliziano?

POLIZIANO

For myself, my lord,
I ask no better grace than to begin,
For here 's a theme full-fashioned to my hand.

LORENZO

Thou, Sandro?

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

'T is a thing I see, but not
To speak on.

GIULIANO

[Noticing his gaze at Simonetta.
Messer Sandro sees. Take heed,
Good painter, that thou art content therewith!]

LORENZO

Poliziano, let me hear thy voice.

POLIZIANO

Beauty
Because the lady Flora spills her flowers,
And the fleet zephyrs with their fragrances
Kiss all the cloudy hill-tops in the spring,
Doth dwell among us. Flora, heedless grown
From her long sovranty of each sweet year,
Runs on, and leaves us the faint odorous breeze
To tell where she hath been, and in her track
The waving legions of the star-eyed flowers.
But follow her, and lo! the Graces dance,
Apollo strikes his lute to fiery song,
And all the murmurous and Olympian shades
Breathe out their paeon of the Attic time.
Follow her, and we pass the groves of Greece,
The pools where Artemis in splendour clove

The crystal deeps with her divine delight,
And round upon her nymphs the silver drops
Splashed, and like moonlight burning its cold flame
Lighted the gloomy woods with chastity.
Follow her, and the bourgeoning sea shall move,
And the white foam shall gather, crest on crest,
Till, formed beneath the grave eternal hand,
The foam doth flutter with inspired life,
And lo!

The Lady Venus treads the laughing wave.

[A movement of applause among
the group.]

LORENZO

All this we knew. What of the might of her?

POLIZIANO

Her beauty hath a might more deep than song,
And sovran Venus, in her beauty clad
Can quell the fervent heart to reverences.
Nay, more;
The body which doth robe the lovely soul,
Itself thrice robed, the garment of a garment,
Still rules men with a law delectable.
As Plato says, the Golden Age returns
When shame is fled, and we, its prisoners,
Are free inheritors of beauty's realm,
Partakers with Endymion in bliss.

LORENZO

[Rising and ironically kissing the
poet's hand.]

Thus much of beauty, but no word to say—
For such as have not Plato by the book—
Where she exists? Our Sandro here could tell,
If he were pleased. A Star from Genoa
(If that my brother will permit me) burns
Among our constellations, queen. How now,
My Sandro?

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

The poet speaks, and from his stream of words,
As they flash by, I gather this and that.
Beauty doth thus and so. The lady Flora,
Artemis, and the goddess from the foam—
All these are words, and beauty dwells in them.

But 'tis my trade to draw her otherwise.
I must find something more immediate
Than "Artemis"—a word to conjure with.
And beauty such as perfect pictures need
Is not so often found, nor easily won.

GUILIANO

The painter hath some strangely daring quest
Behind this pale complaint.

SIMONETTA

What if he has?
The soul of Artemis, of beauty chaste
As snow, must still be living in the world.

LORENZO

Truly, madonna, when I see thee so,
I can believe it.

SIMONETTA

Messer Sandro, speak.
Why doth the painter of his art complain?
If it be rare, so much the greater gift
To fix it for eternity.

SANDRO

So rare
A thing is beauty, to mine eyes,
That only once in all my seeking years
Have I beheld its utter perfectness.
I choose to make a picture, let us say,
Such as our poet spoke of. Shall it be
A Venus rising from the reflux deep,
And Flora walking in her robe of flowers,
The Graces dancing, and Apollo girt
For visiting the world with amber light?
I first must see all this, not as a dream,
Or pallid vision called to life with words,
But in the moving flesh. Apollo, say,
From Messer Giuliano I might frame,
And fall but little short. The Graces, too,
I might by shift accomplish. But the Queen
Of Spring, and Aphrodite's face—
What of these two?

SIMONETTA

And yet this beauty lives?

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

She lives, for I have looked on her.

SIMONETTA

Not for all eyes doth beauty burn alike.

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

Nay, but for mine, this star doth live and blaze.

SIMONETTA

She liveth? Why then should thine art
Enshrine her?

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

Because if this mine art doth fault,
She soon shall bloom within the dismal grave.

SIMONETTA

And so thou offerest—immortality.

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

If my hand fail not. For mine art hath power
To keep her young and fadeless through the years.

SIMONETTA

We speak in riddles, for a maiden shame
Sometimes doth overcome me. Yet, you say
Great Plato calls us prisoners of shame.
I break my bonds then. Sandro, look on me.

SANDRO.

Thy pardon, lady. Thy gracious heart doth turn
In charity upon my lowliness,
So kind art thou.

SIMONETTA

And thou dost offer me
Immortal honour; for the sacred garment
Of my clear soul thou askest. It is thine.
I'll be thy Lady Venus. For this power
Of beauty's mine inheritance. Not long
I keep it. Thou shalt touch with art
The brief and fragile wonder of my being.

GIULIANO

Nay, love, I will not have it so.

SIMONETTA

And thou
Who speak'st of love, hast nought to say of this.

I do this for art's sake. A priestess now,
At some forgotten shrine, some temple dim
In the far morning of the world, I lay
This maiden sacrifice.

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

This cannot be.
Thou knowest that this cannot be.

SIMONETTA

Come thou
In the morning. Fare you well.

[Exit Simonetta.

[Giuliano and Sandro left facing
each other.

GIULIANO

Some spiteful witchcraft hath been set upon her.

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

A spell of truth, that dares to be itself.

GIULIANO

This will I ne'er endure. Thou lovest her.

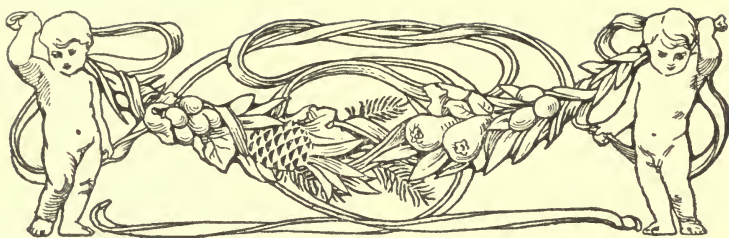
SANDRO BOTTICELLI

My lord, such love as I do bear to her
Pulses with reverent worship, not desire.

LORENZO

Peace, brother! There's a wind from down the vale
That pierces me. A strange, perspicuous thing
Doth knock upon my heart as on a gate.
Break off. I must begone from hence.
The morrow threatens. Let the lutes be still.

[Lorenzo goes off with his train,
and the scene changes to Florence.



SCENE VIII

THE HERALD.

As driven clouds that flee before the wind,
The lustrous days and stormy nights go by;
And Simonetta, flower of Genoa,
Is withered, with the hopes of yester-year.
Sandro still lives, and follows in the train
Of that pale prophet in whose flaming speech
The sins of men are scourged as with a rod,
And he, Savonarola, the Dominican,
Turns all the city to his rigid rule,
And in unyielding battle with the flesh,
Conquers, and quakes, and at the last goes down.
But ere he fall we shall have sight of him
In that strange year when the Magnificent
Crept to his foe for peace and final shrift.
Strange year: in far-off Spain, Granada falls;
And farther still, across the utter deep,
The mariner of Genoa dares, and finds
A star-shown marvel of the ancient sea
Where stainless waves, from immemorial time
Had lapped a virgin shore that no keels ploughed.
But here in Florence, only whispers sound
Of these far ventures.

Ere the prophet comes,
We'll put on festal raiment, and set forth
Along the streets, and see among his lads,
Domenico the Garland-Maker's son.
While the keen bargaining is hot, we'll glimpse
The quaint fantastic, Piero Cosimo,
And two young branches who already bear
The glistening promise of their future fame—
Del Sarto, and the lonely Angelo.

[Before the Shop of Domenico Ghirlandajo, at the sign of the Garland, in Florence.

[Giovanni Tournabuoni comes knocking at the door of the shop; he is followed by a servant carrying a bag of money.

GIOVANNI

Ho, there, Domenico. It's I, Messer Tournabuoni.

[Enter Jacopo l'Indaco, from the shop.

JACOPO

Ay, Signore; serve you, sir?

GIOVANNI

Send me your master, lad.

JACOPO

My master is making a ring for a lady, Signore, and he has to-day to finish a picture for an abbess; and what with these matters for ladies, he will never have time to see you, Signore. May I serve you in his place?

GIOVANNI

Be off, and say I have come to pay him for the paintings in the Ricci chapel.

JACOPO

I'll serve as well for that.

[Enter Ghirlandajo.

GHIRLANDAJO

Back to your task, you rogue.

JACOPO

I like it not, master, when you speak to me so. I'm minded to leave your service. How shall I ever learn to get their money from the gentlemen who come, if you never give me leave to try? And it's something you never teach me, and a very important part of the trade, too.

GHIRLANDAJO

Get within, boy. Signore, the pictures please you?

GIOVANNI

Remind me, Domenico, what were the terms of our bargain? I was to pay you twelve hundred gold ducats for the three pictures; and a good price, too. And if you pleased me well, two

hundred ducats more; which was an odd way to leave the matter, as you'll admit.

GHIRLANDAJO

And do they please you, signore?

GIOVANNI

To be perfectly frank with you, they do not; and yet they are such wonderful pictures, and in them you have outdone all the old masters, and I have never in my life seen such color, nor such style, as yours. And of all the painters in Florence, I hold you are the best, and the most to be shown favor.

GHIRLANDAJO

Save in the matter of the two hundred odd ducats, then, they please you?

GIOVANNI

Well, that's a way of putting it—yes.

GHIRLANDAJO

But all the praise you have spoken of them, otherwise, is from the heart?

GIOVANNI

From the bottom of my heart, Domenico.

GHIRLANDAJO

I would rather hear your praise, signore, than have the two hundred ducats.

GIOVANNI

There's a discreet man, as well as a great artist. And these are truly marvelous works; but having this to say, I would add further, that I have need of the odd ducats myself, and if you will not mention it, we'll say no more about the matter. And here are the twelve hundred.

[Takes the purse from the servant,
and pays him.

Fare you well, Messer Domenico.

[Exit Giovanni.

GHIRLANDAJO

Ho, there, Monica, Jacopo, Cosa—all of you.

[Enter Jacopo, Monica and Cosa
from the shop.

The Signore Tournabuoni has just paid me my money for the frescoes, and he has so praised me that I am minded to leave

everything to you, and set myself to painting for the rest of my days. Trouble me with nothing about the house. Take all orders which come to you, and execute them if you can; let nothing pass, if it be no more than the painting of a basket handle for a market woman.

MONICA

And what if the lads can not do the works?

JACOPO

I—I'll not paint the handle of a market woman's basket!

COSA

Not if she wanted it done the same day.

JACOPO

I'll never stoop to such employments.

GHIRLANDAJO

Take the work, and I'll do it myself. But never trouble me with household affairs, for now that I have found the way to practice this art, I wish the whole circuit of the walls of Florence were given me to cover with pictures.

[Enter a prioress, with nuns.

THE PRIORESS

Domenico, is the panel done?

GHIRLANDAJO

Virtually, mother, it is done.

THE PRIORESS

Have them bring it forth.

GHIRLANDAJO

I would, mother, but for a small matter of finish. It is done, but it is not dry, and I fear me you will not like it so well as the panel I made for the brothers of Santa Croce.

THE PRIORESS

Why not?

GHIRLANDAJO

Well, in that picture, mother, they gave me some good red wine; for you must know that to make good faces, with red cheeks and lips, very good red wine must be mixed with the colors; and what with the poverty of my trade, and the ill quality of the last vintage, I am nigh distracted.

THE PRIORESS

[Aside to the nuns.

I never heard of this matter before; mixing wine with colors.

A NUN

I've heard of it, and that it is the only way to make the faces glow.

ANOTHER NUN

We might send him a butt from our cellar.

THE PRIORESS

We'll no nothing of the sort.

[To Domenico.

Show me the panel.

GHIRLANDAJO

In truth, mother I can not; what with the bad quality of the wine, I have still some painting to do with it. Ah, if I only had some of the older vintage for it!

THE PRIORESS

Domenico, are you quite honest with us?

GHIRLANDAJO

Mother, you wrong me. I am cut to the heart by your suspicions. I never knew one of your order to be so heartless.

THE PRIORESS

I do not understand these matters, but if this be one of the mysteries of your art, I must even help you out. I will send you a butt of our oldest wine.

[She turns back to the nuns.

See to it that the price of the wine be taken out of the price of the panel when we pay the painter. Fare you well, Domenico.

[Exeunt the prioress and nuns.

JACOPO

Master, I have changed my mind. I will stay in your service, since I see that I am learning the necessary things about the craft from you.

MONICA

Oho, here's a wedding afoot!

[Enter the wedding party—the bride, the groom, and the parents of both, with others.

THE FATHER OF THE BRIDE

Is this the shop of Messer Ghirlandajo, the goldsmith?

GHIRLANDAJO

At your service.

[Aside, to Jacopo.

Here's a rich picking; go you and bring Piero di Cosimo. The man's Flemish, and we shall all grow rich from him.

[Exit Jacopo

THE BRIDE'S MOTHER

We have come to order the chest, for my daughter's wedding. And we desire that it shall be painted with a triumph of love, all the way about.

THE GROOM'S FATHER

It will be enough if it be painted on the top.

THE BRIDE'S FATHER

That's a very ill sort of chest, painted only on the top; what of the sides; must they be plain wood?

THE BRIDE

I think I might have the triumph painted also inside the lid.

THE BRIDE'S MOTHER

Sides of plain wood!

THE GROOM

Let her have it, father, I pray you. Let her have all the love she likes on it.

THE GROOM'S FATHER

As you will, but I hold it will be ill done, if it be painted all over; and it will cost me a farm in Flanders.

[Enter Piero di Cosimo

GHIRLANDAJO

I pray you, submit it to this man, who is an excellent artist. Shall the bridal chest be painted on all sides, or merely across the lid.

PIERO DI COSIMO

Who is to paint the chest?

GHIRLANDAJO

I am.

PIERO DI COSIMO

Then across the lid will be enough.

GHIRLANDAJO

What do you mean? This is an ill jest, Piero. Tell them to have it painted all over, and you and Andrea shall paint the sides.

PIERO DI COSIMO

Let me paint the lid, and I'll arrange the matter. You may do the sides.

GHIRLANDAJO

As you will, but do not lose me the work.

PIERO DI COSIMO

Gentles, let me explain this mystery. If it be a thing to be painted by this great master, Messer Ghirlandajo, the lid alone would be a rare gift; but if it be painted all over by him, it will be a masterwork, and such as a most generous man might well give his love; such a gift as the first families of Florence would choose. And so, though the cost is small, I leave it to your generosity to determine which it shall be.

THE GROOM

Let her have it as she likes it, father.

THE GROOM'S FATHER

I'll agree, though it's a pernicious thing for a woman to have her own way, and a thing never tolerated in Flanders.

PIERO DI COSIMO

Now, signore, let me have a word with you. I am much called upon in such matters, and I can help you. Let me make you a list of such things as a generous man should give his bride, that they may be married in handsome style, and never regret it after.

THE BRIDE'S MOTHER

Here's a piece of good fortune, our finding this man.

THE BRIDE'S FATHER

Ay, let him tell us, and we'll get the things he names.

THE GROOM'S FATHER

Sir, you are interfering in a matter which does not concern you.

PIERO DI COSIMO

It will concern me enough, signore, before you have done with it.

It is plain that you must give her a shrine of Our Lady, with

a Saint John on one side, and a Saint George on the other, since he is much favored in Flanders, and I observe that your father, signore, has something of the Fleming about him. And inside the shutters I will paint for you a portrait of you both, that she may be reminded of her husband when she is at prayer—which is a very excellent thing for a woman. And my lad, Andrea, will paint the saints for us, which will make the cost less, and the pictures as good, almost, as though they were done by my own hand.

A GIRL

And here's the mirror, from Venice.

PIERO DI COSIMO

Aha—a mirror from Venice. For this you must have a frame of silver. A good piece of work, nicely wrought. Ghirlandajo, you may make the frame for the mirror. Ah, a good steel. But this is a vanity—I look into it, but it likes me not. For you, madonna, this is for you; you shall bloom in it. And you, madame.

[To the Bride's Mother.

How kindly a friend is a mirror to one of your countenance; in truth, I fear me it will never be able to tell your face from the damigella's. Wonderful, wonderful. You have a daughter about to be married! Wonderful, how the beauty of some women makes them young so long.

THE BRIDE

Messer Domenico, do you make books of hours?

PIERO DI COSIMO

[Interrupting.

Surely, madonna; and that's another thing you must have.

THE GROOM'S FATHER

Come with me, son. I will not listen to this fellow any longer.

THE BRIDE'S MOTHER

[Holding him by the sleeve.

Here's the penury of the Flemish blood. Come back, sir.

THE BRIDE

He has never said a word about a book, nor a garland, nor a girdle, nor a ring.

THE GROOM

I fear, my love, for my father's sake it might be better to come again another day.

PIERO DI COSIMO

Foresight—foresight! An excellent thing in a young bride.
I commend you. A girdle; a silver girdle?

THE BRIDE'S MOTHER

[Scornfully.

A silver girdle!

THE GROOM'S FATHER

[In agony.

A silver girdle!

PIERO DI COSIMO

Silver will do very well, but it must have a sonnet engraved on it. Ho, there Andrea. You will set to work at once to draw me a Saint John and a Saint George for the shutters to the shrine. And you, Angelo, come forth.

[Andrea del Sarto comes out of the shop.

ANDREA DEL SARTO

One for each shutter, master?

PIERO DI COSIMO

Of course.

ANDREA DEL SARTO

May I color them as I choose?

PIERO DI COSIMO

Color them as I bid you, to save the ultramarine. Make them yellow, so to use lots of ochre.

THE BRIDE'S MOTHER

What's that you say?

PIERO DI COSIMO

I bade him make it golden, that it may look rich, for I see the young man is a generous soul.

[Enter Michael Angelo, as an apprentice.

Michael, do you write me a sonnet for the lady's girdle; and see that it be a sweetly flowing one, and of good round numbers.

MICHAEL ANGELO

I will, master, but I must rhyme it as I like—and no one interfering.

THE GROOM'S FATHER

I'll not pay for all this; say what you will, I'll not pay.

PIERO DI COSIMO

Signore, I never meant you should pay for this. Pay for a sonnet! No, signore. This boy is good for little else, so I bade him write it. But we should never think of your paying for it.

THE GROOM'S FATHER

Ay, but all these other things?

PIERO DI COSIMO

For them, of course, Signore, we should expect you to pay.

THE GROOM'S FATHER

The chest with the lid painted—that I agree to. Nothing else.

THE GROOM

And the shrine of Our Lady?

THE GROOM'S FATHER

Not another thing.

[He starts to go off, but is restrained by the others, who all hang upon his coat tails.

THE BRIDE

Not the book of hours!

THE BRIDE'S MOTHER

Not the girdle with the sonnet!

THE GIRL

Not the frame for the mirror?

THE BRIDE'S FATHER

Not the ring, even?

THE GROOM'S FATHER

This is a den of thieves. I will leave it a beggar.

THE BRIDE

Not even the chest with the lid painted inside?

PIERO DI COSIMO

Will you have your son wed like a penniless fellow from the wars?

THE GROOM'S FATHER

Begone, all of you.

[Exit the entire party, hanging on to the groom's father, and all wailing in wrath.

GHIRLANDAJO

Piero, ruin stares me in the face. Look what you have lost me.

PIERO DI COSIMO

Nonsense, man. Take this to your philosophy. A Fleming—boy—a Fleming! And from such, may the gracious saints preserve us all.

[Ghirlandajo retires into his shop, and Piero di Cosimo, somewhat crestfallen, but still confident, returns to his.



SCENE IX

[A Market Place in Florence. Citizens and market people assembled. Sandro Botticelli, attired as a lay brother, moves among them.]

A CITIZEN

'Tis said the Friar will preach again today
Against the Medici.

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

Ay, and the walls
Of this proud city tremble at his words.

A WOMAN

Why does he thus revile the Medici?

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

Because through them is the Republic slain.
Through them the canker feeds upon the heart,
And Florence staggers with iniquity.

ANOTHER CITIZEN

We'll hear him, for his fearful prophecies
Have one and all come true.

A VENETIAN

Is this the place
Where the great prophet of Saint Dominic
Doth speak?

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

Ay, and behold along the streets
The people thronging. In yon open square,
To-day, by his command, the Vanities,
The evil images and pictures, gems,
And books unholy, like Boccaccio's,
And all the works of lure and luxury
There shall be builded in one reeking pyre
And burnt to light the glory of the Cross.
See, where the father comes.

[Enter Savonarola, followed by a
great crowd; he mounts the plat-
form and addresses the people.]

SAVONAROLA

Men of Florence,
This day I speak not of your guilty past,
Nor of the crimes that break your city down,
The sins that have now fallen upon your limbs
Like chains. But of the silken luxury,
The greed of power and lust and fatal ease
That make you slaves. And for the flaming truth
I here have uttered, he who holds the seal
But never held the spirit of the Church,
Proclaims me excommunicate, accursed.
For what? Because I called you from your sins,
And bade you flock unto the sinless Cross?
What need of cursing for all this? Because
In love for me you have shut close your streets
From evil men, and vain displays, and lived
According to the dictates of the Word?
Is this my crime? No, men of Florence, no!
But I have spoken of the Medici
In open terms, and called upon their house
To give you back your ancient freedoms, arts,
And all the liberties your fathers knew.

For this, they brand me excommunicate.

[Enter Lorenzo de Medici and his train.]

A FRIAR

Father, there comes the base Magnifico.
Better we held our preaching elsewhere.

SAVONAROLA

Nay, he is one I most desire should hear.

LORENZO

[To his people.
There's one who comes to live among us here,
Homing within my city and my house,
Who never yet hath paid me courtesy.]

SAVONAROLA

Lord of the Medici, what bringeth thee
Into the street where men do preach God's law?

LORENZO

I came to seek for thee, Girolamo.

SAVONAROLA

So much I had foretold.

LORENZO

Father, thou art
Though I have little cause to love thee else,
The only honest priest in Florence. So,
I seem to flatter thee. My desperate need
Drives me to thee. Father, I have come to feel
About my head the beating of black wings;
Death chills me with his grisly iron clutch,
And I would be, ere my last breath go out,
At peace.

SAVONAROLA

I come not here to bring thee peace.

LORENZO

Yet do I trust thee, and thou art a priest.
Hear my confession, name my penances,
And send my soul upon its lonely flight.
I come to thee, as one who dies, in ruin.

SAVONAROLA

As I am son and seed of Holy Church,

I answer. But since he who rules in Rome
Hath cast me off, I make my own conditions.

LORENZO

Name them, and be brief. My mortal weakness
Overcomes me.

SAVONAROLA

That thou art quick in faith.

LORENZO

Else I had sought thee not.

SAVONAROLA

Thou shalt give back
Unto the city and the poor, all gains
Taken by indirection or injustice.

LORENZO

If I refused thee, it were plain to all,
I am not truly penitent. This, too,
I grant.

SAVONAROLA

And last, thou shalt decree the end
Of thine unlawful lordship over Florence;
Restore the old republic to its own,
And make the city free of all thy house
Endlessly and irrevocably free.

LORENZO

Without this thing thou'lt not absolve me?

SAVONAROLA

Without this pledge, I will not succor thee.

LORENZO

And though I die unshriven, thou art firm?

SAVONAROLA

And though thou die unshriven, this I hold:
Florence must shake thee off, and all thy house.

LORENZO

My friends, the prophet dooms me, judges me.
So be it. Take me home again—for rest.

(Exit Lorenzo and his train.)

SAVONAROLA

In yonder open square, devoted brothers,
Let the fires be lit.

[Exit Savonarola with the Dominicans, many of the people following him. A procession of young people, carrying all manner of Vanities—books, pictures, gems and trinkets of all sorts—moves across the stage toward the fires, from which a glow is seen shining upon the faces of the youths, and on Sandro Botticelli, who stands watching them, lost in meditation.]

SANDRO BOTTICELLI

So do the evils of the world burn down;
A blessed glow is this the flames ray out,
More sweet than many candles round a shrine,
Since lures of hell here turn to lights of peace,
And sin doth furnish fires for chastening.
See where the books of tales unholy burn,
Tales of Morganti and Boccaccio,
Volumes of sorcery and magic arts.
Ah, these are well destroyed, though for myself,
Boccaccio might be saved. He's not all sin.
And pictures, too; I had not thought on this.
How deep in shame the unawakened man
May delve and know it not. Before he came,
I looked on beauty as a heavenly thing,
And blindly courted its delusive grace.

[An artist passes, bearing a Venus to the fires.]

Yon Venus hath a wondrous art in her,
And must the plundering fires consume her? Lo!
She is a shadow—but a shadow of delight,
So beautiful. Yon fragment of pale stone
A heathen chisel shaped ere Christ was born—
Must it go too into the ruining flame?
Ah, this is bitter to mine eyes.

[A man carrying a picture of Botticelli's goes by.]

My work!
How shall I suffer this! From mine own hand
Yon fluttering shape of girlhood, dancing, girt

With flowers about her maiden breast and hair—
From mine own hand! And she was lovelier
Than the pale image shows her; and the stars
Are not more pure than she was. Pause, I say.
I will not have her burn.

[He starts after the bearer of the picture, but turns back with a cry of anguish as the picture is cast upon the fire.

A tongue of flame
Doth lick my naked heart.

[He looks again and finds Savonarola confronting him. Sandro falls on his knees.

Master, do thou
Pray for me. I am lost in desperate sin.



SCENE X

INTERMISSION

THE HERALD



NOW IS THE TIDE FULL FLOOD,
AND GLORIOUS NAMES
SOUND ON THE TONGUES OF
MEN INNUMERABLE;
NOW TIME DOTTH BOURGEON,
AND ALL ITALY
HUMS LIKE A HIVE WITH
MIGHTY CONSUMMATIONS.
OLYMPIAN SOULS ARE THESE,
AND WHAT ARE WE

That we should rouse their glories from their sleep,
And in the vesture of their vanished state
Tread through the masque of their mortality?
So, I beseech you, let your eyes behold
Not the dull poverty of our regard,

But the imperial splendours of their life,
 And clothe us, as we pass, with their renown.
 So shall they live the moment in your minds,
 And we, their lowliest heritors, give due
 And seemly honour with humility.
 But few, of all the swarming genius-brood,
 Can we illume. Some lofty names our play,
 Though from no lack of diligence, must pass.
 Our scene, from Florence, where the flower of art
 Was nourished to the summer of its life,
 Shifts now to Rome, and to the stately town
 Where, throned upon her myriad isles, the Queen
 Of Commerce weds the immemorial sea.
 At Parma, now, Correggio toils alone,
 And great Mantegna, up in Mantua,
 Spreads on his canvas the triumphant march
 Of Caesar. But these both, reluctantly,
 We pass, their eminence forever safe
 From the marauding years. And here we pause
 In reverence ere we speak the golden names
 Of Rafael, Titian, Michael Angelo.

[A dance follows, symbolic of the
 entire movement of the Renaissance;
 after which the scene changes to
 Rome.

[A garden in Rome. Bramante dis-
 covered looking over some plans,
 which are held by two apprentices;
 Pope Julius II with several car-
 dinals, and secretaries; also a num-
 ber of artists.

POPE JULIUS

Bramante, these are my desires; that thou
 Shalt straightway plan, tear down, and build anew
 Saint Peter's Church. This vast design is none
 Too glorious to house, when I am gone,
 The tomb that Buonarroto builds for me.

BRAMANTE

Your Holiness, to hear is to obey.
 But for this tomb—it seems to threaten thee.

POPE JULIUS

To threaten me? What meanest thou?

BRAMANTE

They say
That he who builds his tomb invites his death.

POPE JULIUS

I like not that. For premonitions come,
Sometimes, of words like those. Build thou
The Church. The tomb shall wait.

(Enter Rafael, followed by Giulio
Romano, and many other artists.)

A welcome, Rafael. Look—Bramante's plan
For the rebuilding of Saint Peter's Church.
And I have changed my mind. Our Angelo
Shall paint the frescoes on the Sistine walls.
The tomb must not be done till I am gone.

RAFAEL

Your Holiness, this is not Angelo's work.
He is a sculptor.

POPE JULIUS

He can paint as well.

RAFAEL

He is a sculptor, in the heart of him;
In this he doth surpass all living men,
But if thou dost command that he shall paint
His art must suffer change from thy coercion.

POPE JULIUS

I say that he shall paint. Thou dost not fear
The plow of Buonarroti in thy field.

RAFAEL

I welcome him; and yet it does him wrong.

[The Pope turns to despatch a messenger, and Rafael speaks aside to Bramante.]

Bramante, if this be a stratagem
To bring to shame a man I do not love,
I will not have it so.

BRAMANTE

No plot of mine,
But the Pope's whim.

POPE JULIUS

I've sent for Angelo.

RAFAEL

Your Holiness, forgive mine open speech,
But unto every artist is his art,
His single 'scutcheon in the war of time;
Change thou the art—the shield's reversed—and danger
He else avoided, strikes him unaware.
I am not jealous of this mighty man
But as I do revere his mastership,
I hold his art is sacred to his choice.

POPE JULIUS

Let him serve me well, and I will choose
The clay or color of his mastership.
See, now, the hermit from his cave comes forth.

RAFAEL

The dreamer from his dream—with blinking eyes.
[Enter Michael Angelo.

POPE JULIUS

I called thee, Michael Angelo, to say
The tomb must wait. When Death has taken me—
Then build the tomb. I'll not invite him here,
Nor open a rich chamber to his gaunt
And fearful presence.

MICHAEL ANGELO

The tomb must wait?

[Enter Vittoria Colonna, unob-
served.

POPE JULIUS

Even so.

MICHAEL ANGELO

Then thou dost take my work away,
Out of my hands. That leaves me desolate.

POPE JULIUS

I take away one task to give another
Thou shalt adorn the Sistine Chapel walls.

MICHAEL ANGELO

I am no painter, Holy Father. Give me work
More suited to my heavy hand. The chisel
Is the tool fits best.

POPE JULIUS

Thou servest me? Indeed?
Then thou shalt do my will.

MICHAEL ANGELO

There's Rafael
Could spread a greater glory on those walls.
I am a sculptor.

POPE JULIUS

Nay, my Angelo,
Thou art far greater than thy sculpture is.

MICHAEL ANGELO

Father, I would not serve thee ill. Nor grace
Nor glozing words can change me utterly.

POPE JULIUS

[In anger.

Then hear my mandate; if thou servest me
Thy task is mine to choose and to appoint.
I will it so, and thou shalt bend to it.
Now, Rafael, to thy works. Lead on. This man
For all the wonder of his art, is strange.
Sometimes I scarcely understand him.

[Exeunt Pope Julius, Rafael, Bra-
mante, and the others, leaving
Michael Angelo and Vittoria Co-
lonna.

MICHAEL ANGELO

The tomb shall wait? And what of me? The years
Run on, and waste, and nothing comes of them.
In Rome, in Florence—still the tale's the same.
The mighty work must have majestic stone,
And Princes shift with every breeze of fear.

VITTORIA

Signore, I have something heard of this,
And feeling, as thou dost, a subtile wrong
Unto thine art, I think I understand.
And yet, signore, is the hope so pale,
The future day so blackened with despair?
The Sistine walls are thine.

MICHAEL ANGELO

Ah, gracious lady,
But to what end? The walls may stand or fall,

The storm may wreck them, or the labouring earth
May shake them down to dust. What's that to me?
For now the great design, the vision vast
Wherein I held the centuries in awe,
Must gather mould amid the useless years,
And all the adoration and the power
Must waste beneath the ruin of my dream.

VITTORIA

Signore, might I speak with thee—plain words?

MICHAEL ANGELO

Princess, I am thy subject. Pardon me.

VITTORIA

Thou art a master, and thy steadfast soul
Holds to the course of its appointed star.
But in the storm—why shun the haven light?

MICHAEL ANGELO

There is no haven for the stormy soul.
The rage is all within.

VITTORIA

Nay, then the haven lies within as well.
The urge, the tempest of thy fiery heart
Must have its center, and the vortex there
Is calm.

MICHAEL ANGELO

Madonna, thou art strangely versed
In the deep life that underflows the being.

VITTORIA

Angelo, though I am not wise, as men
In this world reckon wisdom, yet some gleam
I have of thee—some light to see thee by
As thou canst never see thyself. I know
That thou art lonely; and because my life
Has given loneliness and surcease therefrom
In blest communion with a human love,
I know thine isolation: and thy soul
Moves in its own too fervent circle, closed
To the warm radiance of the kindly sun,
To lightening laughter and the rich repose
Of those who find a respite after toil
In the caressing voice of one they love,
Or in the babbling of a little child.

MICHAEL ANGELO

I have a wife already, in this art
Who kindles me incessantly, and makes
My world a home for me through loving her.
And all my works are children, and shall live
A little while when I am gone.

VITTORIA

Then if thou art not lone nor childless left,
Why dost thou rail at princes? Angelo,
Thy love here wears an unaccustomed gown,
Smiles as she is not wont, and sings. .
A song that's new. But her deep heart's the same.

MICHAEL ANGELO

Princess, a light doth break upon me.

VITTORIA

Then am I content.

MICHAEL ANGELO

I had not thought—
Mine art may change as colors change in fire,
Yet never melt away the metal's form.

VITTORIA

A woman smiles, or frowns; and scarlet wears,
Or grey.

MICHAEL ANGELO

I see the pictures growing on the walls.

VITTORIA

I see thee master of thine own.

MICHAEL ANGELO

Princess,
A Fate hath written some unfathomed word
Of thee and me.

VITTORIA

A word inscrutable,
But we shall read it yet—my friend.



SCENE XI

[Titian's garden in Venice.

[Pietro Aretino discovered. Enter
Giovanni Verdezotti.

GIOVANNI

Signore, there's a gentleman who waits
And asks to see the master. From his talk
And something of a wildness in his face,
I think he may be one whom some deep grief
Hath struck down in the heart.

ARETINO

And what of that?
Didst thou not tell him that to-day the master
Leaves Venice?

GIOVANNI

The porter told him this. To him
The words were nought. He looked up with sad eyes,
And prayed again—one word with master Titian.

ARETINO

Is he a nobleman?

GIOVANNI

Of birth, a Florentine, called Della Casa;
A poet, if I do remember rightly.

ARETINO

Titian hath time to-day for no such men.
Bid all the weeping poets straight begone.
We know them not.

GIOVANNI

The man doth speak in tears.
I have no heart to bid him go.

ARETINO

Send him
To me.

GIOVANNI

So please thee, sir, he comes.

[Enter Della Casa.

DELLA CASA

Signore,
I have a word for Messer Titian's ear;
Deny me not. I will be brief. My hope
Hangs on his answer.

ARETINO

Sir, the master's time
To-day is all too full for visiting.
Defer thy urgent suit till his return.

[Enter Titian.

DELLA CASA

[Going over to Titian, eagerly.

Signore, I have come, thus, desolate,
To claim a portrait from thy wondrous hand,
A picture of a lady, painted when
The blessed year of yesterday was young—
A portrait of a lady in a gown
Of green and silver. Thou'lt remember it,
Since she had hair of that rich smouldering hue
Thou lovest so.

TITIAN

Yea, I remember well.

I painted her for thee. Thou couldst not pay,
And so I kept the picture. For mine art
Is not for every man to trifle with.

ARETINO

Titian, why dost thou trifle with it, then?
The princes of the world contend for thee,
And we, thy friends, and at the utmost, I
Who have so brought thee to the great regard
Of even the Emperor, are put to blush
By whims like this—to paint this fellow's dame
And have about thy gate these starveling men,
Scholars and poets who can build for thee
No favor, nor can even celebrate
In worthy fashion, thy majestic fame.

TITIAN.

How, now, Pietro. Why so hard with him?

ARETINO

Titian, my friend, to-day the Cardinal
Will come. I've told him, times and oft,
That thou dost work for princes. Lo! he comes
And finds thee painting for this scarecrow here.
That shames me. Titian, bid the fellow go.

TITIAN

[To Della Casa.

I had forgot. The Cardinal Farnese comes,
And many others, and the proudest heads
Of Venice will be here. Thou'rt right,
Pietro mine. The picture stays with me.
Farewell.

DELLA CASA

I pray thee, master—

ARETINO

Bid him go.
The Cardinal comes.

DELLA CASA

Nay, Titian, hear me out.

ARETINO

Why dost thou pause? By all the heathen gods
I see not why this matter rose at all.

TITIAN

I see—it was the smouldering hair.

[Enter Cardinal Farnese.

A greeting to your Eminence. My friend,

I pray you, pardon me.

CARDINAL FARNESE

Honored Titian,

This is a fortunate day. His Holiness

Hath cause for gladness, when thou dost set forth

For Rome.

DELLA CASA

Titian, if in thy heart a spark

Of mercy or of charity hath place

Thou wilt not drive me off. It can not be

Thou hast forgot her mortal loveliness,

The picture now is all that's left to me.

I could not pay thee, and I can not now.

But since the darkness of my destiny

Closed in about me, that one shining shape

Alone can draw my spirit back from hell;

Since she I loved, with all the red-gold hair

About her marble face with the closed eyes,

Is gone out of the sunlight, unto death.

TITIAN

The lady thou didst love is dead?

DELLA CASA

Even so.

[Enter the Duke of Mantua, with
his train.

TITIAN

Pietro, wouldst thou have me lightly shun

A heart that bleeds, for some few strokes of paint?

Your Grace, and Monsignore, and my friends,

This gentleman commands me. Once, it seems,

I served him. You will pardon me, Signore,

The picture shall be thine. Gian, be swift.

[He takes Della Casa by the hand,
and goes aside with him, giving di-
rections to Giovanni, who goes out.

ARETINO

[To the Duke and the Cardinal.

Our Titian is a wayward gentleman;
Here's metal for the poet's fire: he gives
To this poor fellow who hath lost his love
A canvas that the Signory of Venice
Hath nought to equal.

TITIAN

Friends, and noble sirs,
I bid you welcome. Thus you honour me
Too greatly for a painter in a world
That hath so many traffics, governments,
Wars and divisions. Humbly I welcome you.

CARDINAL FARNESE

And I, by express order of His Holiness,
Here offer thee felicitations. Glad
Is the day when thou dost honour stately Rome
With thy rich presence, Titian.

DUKE OF MANTUA

And I, Federigo de Gonzaga,
Of Mantua, bring thee greetings. When thy stay
In Rome is done, Mantua waits thee, and her bells
Shall swing with joy when thou dost come to her.

TITIAN

There are too many years upon my head;
My lord, I fear me I shall never hear
The bells that swing amid the towers of Mantua.

[Enter the Duke of Ferrara.

DUKE OF MANTUA

Still, by the invitation I do honour,
And if a holy office call thee elsewhere,
We must be content.

TITIAN

Your Grace's coming
Doth make a holiday of my departure.

DUKE OF FERRARA

I bring thee, Titian, messages and words
Of greeting from my friend and sovran liege
King Francis, in whose lofty favour thou
Art throned above all painters. For myself,

I do rejoice thy long and glorious life
Hath passed so lightly over thee, that now
When many of thy youthful friends are gone,
Thou still dost thrive in lusty livelihood.

TITIAN

I thank thee; yet thy kindest words
Strike me with sorrow. There was one I knew,
A friend, Giorgione was his name; if he
Instead of I had been thus spared to life,
How great a blessing it had been to art—
Aye, and to Italy.

CARDINAL FARNESE

Titian, have done
With these black thoughts. For know that to thy soul
Death welded his sweet spirit when the scythe
Did cut him down.

[Enter Don Diego de Mendoza;
Titian kneels to the Imperial banner.]

MENDOZA

Titian, I humbly bring
Thee greetings from my sovran lord; and he,
My master, who doth hold his sway and pomp
Over the Holy Empire of the Cross,
O'er Germany and Spain and the Low Lands,
And the far North, and all the Provinces
That rim the Christian world against the night,
Doth pray that this thy journey unto Rome
May bring thee honours equal to thy worth.
And that thou still mayst conquer by thine art
The ancient city of the Triple Crown.

TITIAN

My lord, Ambassador of Caesar, I entreat
But this, that I may serve the Emperor,
And die when I can please his heart no longer.
[Enter the Doge of Venice.]

THE DOGE

Titian. The Senate and the Signory
Of Venice send thee greetings and decree.
That to the borders of our high authority
All men shall serve thy journey, and make safe

Thy going and thy swift return. In thee,
His Holiness doth honour Venice.

TITIAN

My lord,
I thank thee, and in this regard set forth
As ever I have done; whate'er the world
May offer to mine eyes—here is my home.

[Enter Paolo, Veronese and Tintoretto.

And these my friends, though younger in their skill,
Will yet, while I am gone, make beautiful
This city of my dreams. Paolo, thy hand
Jacopo, thine; Princes, these are the peers
Of mine estate.

TINTORETTO

Ser Titian, if unworthy pride
Speak in me, pardon it, but this I hope,
That where the Roman painters, men of worth,
Discuss the might of this our glorious art,
Thou wilt uphold our Venice to them all.

PAOLO

And tell them, too, that while their fading light
Goes down, in Venice we look forward still.

CARDINAL FARNESE

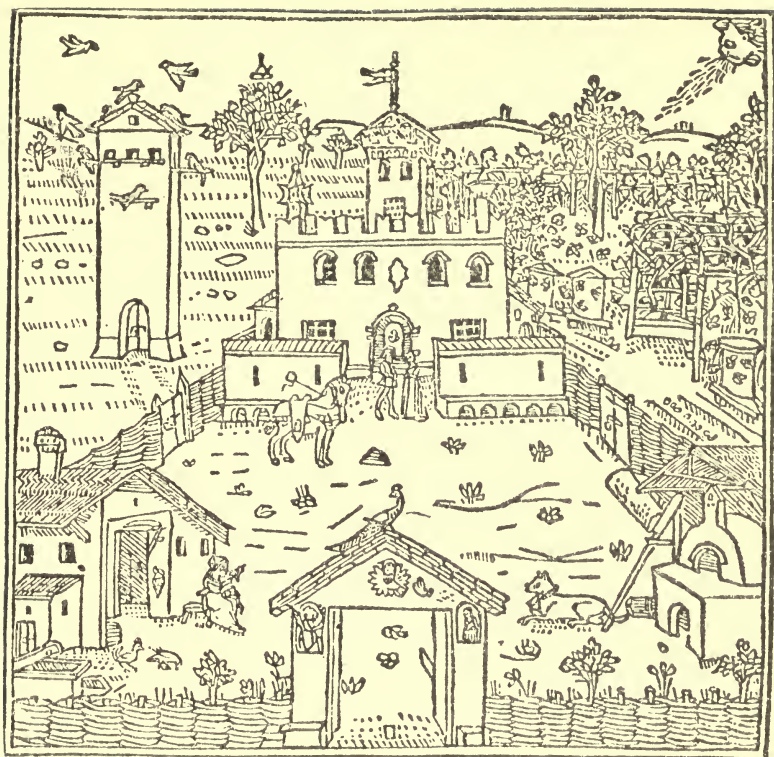
Now must we all set forth, and as we ride
And the long journey through the weary days
Doth settle on our spirits, know you this:
In every little chapel in the hills,
And every echoing nave of holy Rome,
Some faithful soul doth pray for Titian's journey,
And doth entreat for him the care of Heaven.
Fair days abroad, and prosperous return.

[The procession goes out.

DELLA CASA

And one he leaves behind shall pray as well,
While life remains, and in his humble song
Shall glorify this generous soul. For me,
The echo of a love around my heart, and praise
For Titian—These are all of life.

[Lights Out.



SCENE XII

[Titian, Vasari and Michael Angelo
Discovered.

TITIAN

Signore, since I came to Rome, I feel
A tremor at the core ; my courage fails,
Where everything is old—so old, it seems,
I am too young for wisdom. Yet my years
Do weigh upon me.

VASARI

Messer Titian yearns
For Venice. Master, thou must comfort him.

MICHAEL ANGELO

Leave us, Vasari. For between us twain
There is a thing that must be spoken out
And no man know of it.

[Exit Vasari.]

TITIAN

Thine art and mine
Are each to each opposed as the poles,
Yet thou dost praise my pictures. What of this?
I cannot find, in the sun's golden light,
In the rich colour of Dame Nature's robe
The elements of thy supremacy.

MICHAEL ANGELO

Nor I the glow and glamour of thy sight.

TITIAN

So we have failed—both failed?

MICHAEL ANGELO

Nay, we have wrought
Each by his light, and each has found his truth,
Not both the same. But when we two go down
Into the night, the lamp of art shall fall,
And men must grope for beauty by the faint
And pale reflection of a vanished flame,
As in the wakening of Italy
They strove to catch the buried gleam of Greece.

TITIAN

In Venice there is still a day to come
And men shall carry on the torch.

MICHAEL ANGELO

Not long
It burns after thy passing.

TITIAN

Then with us
The glory dies. And still for me the doubt—
Which is the truth, the sovran truth. Thou art
A poet, and thou buildest lofty rhyme;
Thou art a painter, and the majesty
Of Christ in Judgment o'er embattled hells
Is in thy ranging message; thou art one
To whom the rearing of eternal domes

Is like the blowing of a bubble in
The silent air; and marble to thy hand,
As to its lord, yields virgin ecstasies.
As thou art wise, I pray thee shrive my doubt,
And set at rest the shaking of my soul.
Thou knowest all these arts. Which one is Truth?

MICHAEL ANGELO

These are not Art.

These are the shadowy shapes of her, the moods
She masks in. Art—I know of but one Art.

[The light comes on, and the Herald
enters, leading a processional of all
the characters of the Pageant, in re-
versed chronological order.



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